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RUSSWARD
Saintpaulia Growers

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News Letter

August, 1950

NOTICE: Will the lady who ordered a Blue Girl Supreme, a Red Girl, and a Pink Girl, enclosing a \$5.00 bill to cover, last June 16th please drop us a card and tell us where to send these plants? She didn't sign her name, and the best we can make out the postmark is "Miderstrug", Pennsylvania. Post Office says there ain't no sich. Will some of you kind souls who are in Robins please clip this and insert in letters Pennsylvania-bound? Thanks.

Dear Friends:

Many of you have written to ask what makes saintpaulia foliage curl down around the pot. The prevailing theory seems to be that if the plants are allowed to dry out so much that the foliage droops, it will stay that way even after the plant is watered because of the weight of the leaves. Sounds logical. Best way to prevent it, then, would be to keep the plant moist at all times—either by very careful watering, or by wick arrangements, or by growing the plants in clay pots set in damp sand.

If you have a plant which is already curled down and you want to straighten it out, you might be able to work the same idea in reverse: let it dry out, arrange a flat collar out of stiff cardboard, and water. You might have to leave the cardboard in place for a couple of weeks until the leaves are trained. Now this is speculation, y'understand. I've never tried it. Personally, I don't particularly mind if the leaves droop. Kinda like 'em that way.

If you haven't heard of or thought about that damp sand idea, please let me recommend it. It cuts

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your watering down from eight or ten operations (depending on how many plants you have) to one. Just water the tray of sand instead of each pot or saucer. The violets benefit by the higher humidity, too. The bugaboo of "disease" is often quoted as an argument against this method of culture, but it's a little far-fetched, it seems to me. You might get run over if you cross the street, too.

If you don't have too many plants to take care of, a large tray will fill your need nicely. Or you might have an old table or tea wagon you'd like to use for your plants. Have a tinsmith make a tray to the exact dimensions (make a paper pattern if necessary) of the table. Have him make the side about 4 inches high. If you want to add a few years of life to the tray, coat the inside with asphalt paint. Fill it two or three inches deep with clean sand.

How To Wash Sand: Fill bucket half full of sand. Fill bucket to top with water, releasing it from the tap at full pressure so that the sand is violently churned around in the pail. Allow to stand several seconds so that the sand will settle to the bottom. Pour off dirty water. Repeat until water is clear. If the sand is treated with a disinfectant such as Lysol or Clorox, this should be added to the first water, allowed to stand 15 minutes, and then the sand washed until all trace of odor is gone.

If you want to go ultra casual with your sandbox, you might like to be reminded that when you break off leaves, whether by design or by accident, your propagating bed is right there. Just stick them down in the damp sand. You'll be using liquid fertilizer in the sand for the pot plants anyway, and you might be surprised to see how your cuttings will flourish right there in the same tray with the parents. If the time comes when the cuttings crowd out the pot plants, that's all right, too. Have another tray made.

One word of caution: Equip yourself with a bulb syringe of some sort ("turkey basters" ideal for this purpose) to draw off excess water if your hands slips and you flood the tray accidentally. The sand should be moist, never wet. Pots should be set at least an inch deep in the sand—the deeper the better.

Have had a few inquiries about caring for violets in a greenhouse. The only major difference is that you'll have to water more. You can expect the greater heat to dry them much faster than in your home. Outside of the watering, you haven't

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much to worry about. You won't have as many bugs, you won't have as much crown rot, you won't need to fertilize as much, there'll be no need for turning the plants for even light exposure, and unless your water supply is very heavily doctored, you won't need any fancy special water for the plants. In short, the whole operation is just a darn sight easier with a greenhouse. Of course, you can expect faster growth, and no doubt you'll spend more time in plant grooming (picking off dead blooms, crown division, etc. . . .)

As for setting up your greenhouse propagation beds and watering arrangement, there are so many suggestions that could be made it would be a little futile to go into them here. The size of your greenhouse, type of work you intend to do, (propagation, grooming a few fine plants, or hybridizing) and the amount of time and money you would have to devote to your hobby would all enter into your plans. If you will have more than fifteen plants to take care of, however, you will find that some method of community watering will be necessary.

Also a word about shading your greenhouse. Remember that Old Sol can stew a violet beyond redemption in ten minutes. So don't put a single plant into the house until you have applied some sort of shade to the glass to screen out the direct sun. Shading is always a problem because you need a lot in the summer and not so much in the winter. In other words, what goes on in the spring will have to come off in the fall. Even in the winter, however, you'll need a light shade. You may apply a light coat of permanent oil paint to the interior glass surface or line your house with cloth. With the onset of summer, spray whiting on the outside as you need the extra shade. Fall rains will gradually wash off the outside whiting and your inside paint or cloth will give you what protection you need during the winter.

Now, if you use straight whiting with water, it will all wash off with each and every shower. To avoid spending the summer squirting white-wash, you should add something to make it stick to the glass. We've tried a lot of different sizing products but have found linseed oil the most satisfactory. One quart of heated linseed oil to two gallons of mixed whiting about does it. This can be painted on if you have a small house.

Addresses many of you have asked for:

African Violet Society: Warren Gottshall,
Treasurer, Box 901, Alexandria, Virginia.
\$3.00 annual dues. Tell 'im Russ sent you.

RUSSWARD
Saintpaulia Growers

629 W. MATTHEWS AVE.

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Sustaining Member African Violet Society of America, Inc.



Ship To_____ Date_____

Street or R.F.D. _____

Town and State_____

Amount Enclosed \$_____

If this order is being sent as a gift, please write your own name and address below, since we would like to notify you of shipment.

Gift wrapping on request.

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Cut Along Line

Pre-fab greenhouses:

National Greenhouse Co., Pana, Illinois.

Winandy Greenhouse Construction Co.,
Richmond, Indiana.

Ickes-Braun Greenhouse Mfg. Co., 2320 Wabansia Ave., Chicago 47, Ill.

Lord and Burnham, Des Plaines, Illinois.

Greenhouse Insurance:

Florist Hail Ass'n., Edwardsville, Illinois.

Reading Matter:

Chabot, **Greenhouse Gardening for Everyone**, \$4.00, M. Barrows and Co., New York.

Yours,

"Russ"

PRICE LIST

Amethyst, West Coast—Excellent bloomer. Pale lavender blooms in profusion, dark green tapered foliage **\$1.25**

Bi-Color—Upper petals deep red violet, lower lavender. Slick foliage **\$1.50**

Blue Bird—Fine medium blue. Improved large medium foliage **\$1.25**

Blue Butterfly—This is one you won't be sorry you bought. Vivid green neat pointed foliage, medium pale blue flower with slender petals. A very delicate-looking plant for it's good size.... **\$1.50**

Blue Eyes—One of the early pale blues. Good slick foliage, nice habit and blooming qualities **\$1.25**

Blue Girl—Scalloped, medium green foliage with white marking at the base of the leaf. Rich blue flower **\$1.25**

Blue Knight—Medium blue flowers of quite large size, big foliage. A fine showy plant to grow **\$1.75**

Blue Ripple—Medium pale blue flower, some wav-
ing in leaves of mature plants. Graceful, round-
ed foliage \$1.75

Blush Maid—Exquisite shell pink. Foliage like
Pink Beauty, bloom much paler \$1.25

Blush Orchid—Pale, pale orchid. Pink Beauty-
type foliage \$1.25

Brown's Pet—This is an origination of the R. A.
Brown and Sons Company, hence the "Brown's".
Makes for a little confusion, however. Occasional-
ly a customer expects a real brown plant. Pet is
not brown. It's green. Dark blue flowers. Neat,
little compact Blue Girl miniature \$1.75

Double Duchess—Double Blue Boy. Fertilize gen-
erously to keep the blooms opening \$1.50

Double Neptune—Same Neptune foliage, roundish,
quilted, red reverse with gorgeous big double
flower. Multiple-crown plants of this \$2.50

Double Orchid—Same plant as Regal Wine. Twin
of Double Duchess with orchid double flower
..... \$1.75

Gorgeous—Slick, spooned foliage (give stronger
light to maintain spooning). Lovely red-orchid
flower \$2.00

Kewensis—Pale green foliage, tiny little medium
blue flower. This has been incorrectly named, un-
fortunately. It is a species rather than a variety,
and the horticultural purists refer to it as Saint-
paulia diplotricha \$1.25

Lavender Girl—Scalloped, medium green foliage
with the white marking at the base of the leaf.
Pale lavender bloom \$1.50

Lavender Lady—This comes from the same gen-
eral family as West Coast Amethyst. Foliage
similar, bloom darker-mid-way between a "red"
and a pale lavender \$1.25

Lilac Princess—New, profuse-blooming pale lav-
ender. Roundish leaf, slick, dark green \$1.50

Moire—Variegation of rich purple blossom re-
sembles Moire taffeta. Medium green foliage \$1.75

Old Lace—Deeply scalloped leaves. Dark blue
flowers carried high and profusely \$1.75

Orchid Beauty—Good old standby. Orchid sport
of Blue Boy. Profuse \$1.25

Periwinkle—Distinct for the pale reverse of the light blue flower, giving the blossoms a halo effect ----- **\$1.50**

Pink Girl—Scalloped, medium green foliage with the white marking at the base of the leaf. Pink flower ----- **\$1.75**

Purple Beauty—Fine multiple-crown plants of this favorite. Slick, red-reverse foliage, medium purple flower ----- **\$1.75**

Purple Prince—Magnificent for color. Rich, velvety red-purple with slick, heart-shaped leaves ----- **\$1.50**

Red Girl—Usual girl foliage with red-lavender blossom ----- **\$1.50**

Red Head—Rich claret red flowers. Slick, improved foliage ----- **\$1.50**

Rosalie—Red-lavender variety of great merit. Leaves grow to enormous size, quite dark green, troughed and slightly waved ----- **\$1.75**

Rose Purple—Medium blue flowers with rosy cast. Fine foliage. We guarantee you'll like this one! ----- **\$1.50**

Sailor Girl—Pale, pale blue girl type ----- **\$1.75**

Tinted Lady—The palest blue. Foliage like West Coast Amethyst ----- **\$1.25**

Thirty-Two—This one is handsome. Slick, dark green foliage with fine-textured blue-lavender flowers ----- **\$1.75**

Von Deitrich—Impressive variety with gorgeous foliage. Fast grower, quite large. Medium large flower ----- **\$1.50**

White Lady—White flowers against medium green foliage ----- **\$1.25**

White Prize—Many collectors prefer this variety to White Lady because of its profuse blooming qualities ----- **\$1.50**

Shipping Information—Plants shipped in 2-inch pots in which they are grown. Cultural instructions included. List price includes packing and mailing cost. All orders sent special handling. We guarantee safe arrival of plants. For your own protection, please remit by check or money order.

Coming Next Month: Fringette series, White Girl, Blue Chard and many others.
